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The Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital earnestly request of their Fellow Citizens a candid Perusal of the following Address.

The Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital would once more recal the recollection of their fellow citizens, (if it be not a reproach to presume that they have ever been forgotten) to the interesting and almost sacred objects of this Institution; the General Hospital, which embraces the ever varying and innumerable cases of physical suffering combined with poverty, and the Asylum for the Insane, which undertakes the care, alleviation or cure, of the most dreadful calamity, to which human nature is exposed.*

* It pleased the Legislature of this Commonwealth in their Charter of Incorporation, accompanied with a munificent endowment, to commit the care of the property, and management of both institutions to the same Trustees. This provision, though undoubtedly wise, considering the present state of our opulence, and population, has not only been questioned, but has probably in some degree retarded the progress, though, it is believed, it will ultimately secure the stability, and increase the usefulness of the Institution. There can be but two objections to the union of the powers of management in one body. The first, that the Trustees for their own convenience might place both establishments on one scite, or even in one edifice. The second, that the funds destined to the one, might be diverted, and applied to the support of the other. Both these objections have been anticipated, examined, found to be reasonable and important, and effectually obviated.

The institutions are to be locally distinct; the funds are to be separately invested, and the accounts kept in a distinct set of books. They are to be held, and saredly applied to the specifick objects to which the donors may respectively apply them. The law in this case fortunately concurs with the wishes of the Trustees, and the intentions of benefactors. As to management only, no reasonable man can doubt, that twelve gentlemen, four of whom are appointed by the Governour and Council, and subject to the visitation of the Governour, Lieutenant Governour, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and the Chaplains of both Houses, will be competent to manage both houses, especially as they will doubtless be divided into two Committees, for the separate superintendance of each branch of the Charity: Neither can there be the smallest reason to believe, that one institution will be cherished in preference to the other.

But should the Trustees so far lose sight of their duty as to foster such a disposition, we have seen that they will be sufficiently restrained in the indulgence of such a preference.

To afford the strongest proof of their sincerity, and impartiality between the claims of these two institutions, the Trustees have actually agreed with Mr. Joy, for the purchase of the mansion house of the late Mr. Barrell in Charlestown, with a lot in their opinion sufficiently ample for the purposes to which it is destined. This is intended as an Asylum for the Insane. It is not necessary, if even expedient, that this institution should be in the Capital. The cases are neither so pressing as to time, nor the removal of the patient so dangerous or difficult, as in the instances of the subjects of the General Hospital. So far from it, retirement, the beauty and calm of rural scenery, seem peculiarly adapted to convalescent patients in mental diseases. The situation selected, appears to unite every practicable advantage, (we should almost say) the irreconcileable ones of propinquity and dis-

It would seem to be a reproach on the intelligence of their fellow citizens to presume, that they are ignorant of the benefits, which the experience of ages has proved to result from similar establishments in other countries or states; and it would be a still greater injustice to the moral character of this most ancient Capital in the United States to believe, that, knowing the value and imperative obligation of erecting such institutions, they have lacked the charity and munificence to found and support them. That Boston should be almost the only town of equal opulence and population in christendom without one suitable and exclusive place of refuge for the sick and insane, must be attributed to any cause rather than a want of benevolence. Perhaps its general prosperity, or its uncommon display of private charities have hitherto seemed to render the founding such establishments less urgent. Erroneous opinions may have, we respectfully suggest, prevailed upon this topick, and have cooled that philanthropick ardour which might, under other circumstances, have inflamed every heart in the community. It has been said that the Almshouse offered a substitute for both these charities. Passing by the well known fact, that the care of the poor who are not visited with any curable diseases, is of itself an object of such magnitude as to demand entire and exclusive attention, we would ask, what arrangement could be more unsuitable and distressing for all parties, than to huddle into one common receptacle, the sick in every stage and under every form of disease, with the healthy, but unhappy poor, to compel the aged victims of poverty to be constant spectators to the most heart rending scenes, to expose them to every species of contagious disorders, to mingle in one dread concert the screams of the maniac, the feverish complaints of the sick and the groans of

tance, being scarcely separated from the town by water, while its peninsular situation places it at the most desirable distance. Reposing with the confidence due to the character of the Citizens of Boston, in the immediate success of the subscription, the Trustees have, moreover, procured a grant of the land west of the Almshouse upon which they have voted to erect the General Hospital, as soon as the monies, which they flatter themselves will be readily subscribed, shall have been collected.

the dying? Shall we misname this Charity? Is this the divine virtue recommended to our imitation? or is it an avaricious attempt to rob our Common Father of the talents which he committed to our charge for the solace and relief of his offspring?—Will it be said that private charity, or even that valuable institution the Dipensary, will supply the place of these contemplated foundations? They are designed for cases which neither the Dispensary, nor private benevolence can touch, much less alleviate. Private charity (were it as boundless as in the apostolick age, were men now ready to give up all their goods to take up the cross) might indeed supersede the necessity of an Almshouse, but could not come within the range of the subjects of an Asylum for the Insane, or even of a General Hospital. The removal of the patient, from scenes in which he is the cause of terror, suffering, and perhaps even death to his dearest friends, to a situation, in which every measure is adapted, and every preparation made for his security, judicious treatment, and, if possible, cure, is the grand object of a Lunatick Hospital, and which the most boundless private charity has scarcely a tendency to effect. The same remark will apply with nearly equal force, to the exclusive advantages of a General Hospital. It is intended to relieve the tortured or languishing sufferer from the fatality of cold, uncomfortable, and noisy apartments, from the neglect, brutality or intemperance of his attendants, if any such he may chance to have: now these are evils which the stream of private bounty, be it ever so copious, can never remove.

It is a fashionable apology, which our ingenuity suggests to our avarice in so subtle a manner that we do not discern the suspicious quarter from which it proceeds, "that such establishments have a tendency to check the industry and diminish the providence of the laborious poor." But alas! "The Pestilence which walketh in darkness and wasteth at noon day," is no respecter of seasons or persons. The industrious and provident may be, and very, very often are,

surprized by dreadful accidents, or wasting disease, before any accumulation could have been made, or his sickness may be procrastinated to a time long after his means shall have been exhausted: besides, on the very best supposition, he will be exposed to the inconveniences of bad apartments, to which his economy or providence can have afforded no remedy in the earlier part of a labourer's life.—This cold, calculating objection, will still less apply to the cases of insanity. This awful disease, (which in the figurative language of the East is often spoken of as the possession of unclean spirits, and which appears to have peculiarly interested the compassion of our Saviour) respects no condition of life. If there be any difference, it would seem rather to prefer the houses of the children of affluence. It is one of the cases in which Divine Providence seems, even in this world, to equalize the conditions of men. Those who have examined publick institutions for the relief of this calamity, must know how much they are to be preferred to any private ones. The recent history of the British Parliament will shew that some scenes of horror have been unveiled in private mad houses, which would make a savage shudder. All classes of society are therefore equally interested in the success of this plan, and these calculations of problematical policy ought not to divert or prevent us from doing an obvious, immediate, and practicable good.

One of the principal reasons which was urged to the Legislature, and which finally induced them to incorporate and partially to endow this Institution, was its tendency to the improvement of medical science. It is singular, that the same reasons, which operated so powerfully on the Government, and which are universally felt and admitted in Europe, should have been urged as objections to this plan. It has been said that the feelings and even health of the patients in an hospital may be the sport of the curiosity of Surgeons and Physicians. It is, indeed, one of those objections, which carries in itself the means of its own refutation. It presupposes, not only a total want of attention on

the part of the Trustees of this Charity, not merely a wanton and unfeeling disposition in the medical gentlemen selected to attend it, but a foolish and contradictory contempt of their own interest, of their own fame and reputation. Will not the number of patients discharged as cured, and the operations successfully performed, not only fill the wards of the hospital, but extend the fame, and secure the fortune of the operators in their private practice? Besides, are the poor, scattered as they now are, less subject to such wilful and wicked experiments, if medical men could be supposed to be so destitute of humanity, than they would be in an hospital, under the eye of humane and respectable nurses and guardians?

But an hospital is not merely an eleemosynary institution, it is not exclusively destined to the Poor. The stranger, unhappily arrested on his travels, the sufferer under some new or rare disease, which ordinary skill cannot relieve, whether poor or not, will here find admittance and perhaps relief. This Charity is intended to alleviate and diminish the amount of human calamity generally. Many diseases are of so rare occurrence that it does not fall to the lot of any one Surgeon to see more than a single case perhaps in the course of his life. Of course he must be destitute of experience in those cases, and of necessity of skill; he will not probably be provided with the requisite instruments for operation, for almost all uncommon diseases have instruments peculiarly adapted to them. But although these cases are of rare occurrence in any *individual's* practice, yet the aggregate number in the State is vast, and could we see them all collected in one extensive hall it would move the very walls to compassion. There are probably some hundred persons in the Commonwealth in a more or less advanced state of the disease of the eye called Cataract, as many probably with stone, with white swellings, with aneurisms, with incipient cancers, and all the other dire scourges of our mortal frame. Many of these victims are tortured, or murdered piece meal by empiricks because the intelligent

and modest surgeons decline to operate in cases of great delicacy and difficulty.

For all these cases the General Hospital offers the fairest chance for relief. Here they will be treated by gentlemen selected by the Corporation for their skill and science, who, uniting to the opportunities which the practice of the Capital afford, those of the Hospital, must be supposed to be more capable of performing with security delicate and difficult operations. In this place skill will be acquired, and as from a centre will be diffused throughout the State. All sorts and classes of men (so long as diseases shall continue to afflict them) will be interested in the success of this Charity.

For want of such an one, our Students in Medicine who can meet the vast expence, are frequently sent to London, Paris, or Philadelphia, solely for the benefit of seeing Hospital Practice. The State and Town are not only drained of the money thus expended, but fail to reap the advantages and reputation which an influx of strangers, occasioned by an extensive Hospital, would produce.

Perhaps, however, the dignity and imperative character of this duty ought to disdain these calculations of interest, however otherwise important.

If to alleviate the sufferings of our fellow men be one of the highest moral obligations, and one of the sublimest Christian virtues, the only question should be, have these Hospitals that tendency?

It would seem to be a satisfactory reply to that question, to quote the remarks of the eloquent defender of Christianity, Chateaubriand, that Hospitals owe their origin to the Christian religion, that they were not known to the Pagan world, that they have been nearly coeval with the Church, have grown with its growth, and strengthened with its strength, that they survived even the assaults of the barbarians, and so far from being rejected by the returning light of civilization, they are daily more and more extended. It can scarcely be contended, that institutions sustained and cherished for so many ages, amidst so many nations, differing

in climate, habits, and forms of polity, are radically wrong in principle or even of problematical benefit. And what if it be an illusion? How delightful an error! How much safer and more amiable to do a certain and practicable good rather than to yield to the fears of a remote and possible evil!

The Roman Catholick, and the Greek, the Lutheran and the Calvinist, the Presbyterian and the Quaker, have all united in considering this as one of the most peremptory Christian duties; and shall the Congregational scion alone be barren of one of the sweetest fruits, which the tree of Christianity has produced? Shall this metropolis give a colour to the aspersions which have been cast upon its religious principles, and afford reason to believe that its inhabitants are deficient "in vital piety, that their religion is that of the lips and not of the heart."

Shall it be said, that the aggregate charity of the opulent and middling classes in this town, fall infinitely short of that of a single bookseller in the city of London? More than a century ago, Guy gave upwards of a million of dollars to found and support the Princely Hospital which bears his name, and one fifth of this sum would amply effect all the moderate objects of the present application.

And what are these enormous sacrifices which we are called upon to make? of our ease, our fortunes, our comforts? No. A donation amounting to five per cent. upon the *income only*, of all the citizens of this town, would amply suffice. There is no man so poor whose mite would not be acceptable and useful. There are none so rich, whose posterity may not in a few years derive benefit from this Charity—But we would bribe no man to do his duty. It is not a Gift which we ask, we demand the payment of a debt. We are all stewards of God's bounty, and we are bound and directed to distribute it. To be sure we can evade it. There is no process which runs to execute this judgment on earth—Avarice and Ambition may invent apologies which we may disguise even to our own minds under the form of conscientious objections. We

may thus impose on others, and possibly on ourselves. We may tremble lest the money thus repaid to the Lord may never again be returned or credited to us in account. We may fear lest our opulent rival may have more nerve and refuse, and thus his heap may surpass our own. Our relative consequence may be thus diminished.

But is there no source of reputation more fragrant than that of insulated wealth? Is the character of Dives more attractive than that of Joseph of Arimathea? or do we feel more ambitious of deserving the reputation of the miser Elwes rather than that of Howard?

Perhaps, however, our Providence extends beyond the grave, and we blend our attachment to our treasures with the sacred and amiable ties of paternal affection, but does not the legacy of a good name add some value even to the most splendid inheritance?

Shall we compel our children, out of respect to our memories to imitate our defects, or even vices, or permit *their* conduct to be an indirect censure on our *own?*

After all, one reflection cannot escape us. It will not be in our power after neglecting this application to reply to the question which we are assured will one day be put to us, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered," &c. for it can surely be answered to us in reference to this refusal "Inasmuch as ye did it not or refused to do it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not (or refused to do it) unto me."

T. H. Perkins,
John Lowell,
Josiah Quincy,
Daniel Sargent,
Joseph May,
Joseph Coolidge, Jr.
Tristram Barnard,
Gamaliel Bradford,
Jonathan Phillips,
J. L. Sullivan,
Richard Sullivan.